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The Montreal, Ottawa & Georgian Bay Canal Company.

THE MOLSONS BANK CHAMBERS,

Ottawa, February 8th. 1896.

DEAR SIR,

I understand that His Worship the Mayor and the Council of the City of Ottawa have invited you to join the deputation which will wait on the Government on Tuesday, February 18th, for the furtherance of the project of opening the Ottawa River to navigation, and completing a through waterway along its course and that of the French River from Montreal to the Great Lakes. As it is desirable that no one to whom such invitation is addressed should neglect to take proper interest in the matter, I offer for your careful consideration a few thoughts with regard to the object for which the meeting in question has been called.

Anyone who has made even the most cursory examination of the subject is fully assured that sooner or later the Ottawa River must become one of the great commercial highways of the continent. The excellence of the route and its many and great advantages have been long recognized, and no argument is needed to show the importance and practical nature of the proposed canalization. Many causes which have operated in the past to hinder or prevent its becoming an accomplished fact have been removed by the progress of events, and there has never been a time so favorable for the prosecution of the undertaking as the present. A just appreciation of its consequence should lead every resident of the Ottawa Valley especially to actively interest himself in its promotion, the more so since failure to push it now would probably result in postponement of its completion for some time to come.

When the project was first mooted there were almost insuperable difficulties in the way to off-set the undeniable advantages the route offered. For the most part it lay through what was then a trackless wilderness known only to the Indian and the trapper, and accessible only by canoe. Supplies and material could be brought in only at enormous expense. The cost of operations was excessive as compared with to-day, because of the lack of modern engineering methods and appliances. Then apparently there was no large constituency to be served by the route when completed. All the northern part of Ontario and Western Quebec were looked upon as a barren wilderness with a climate little short of Arctic in its rigors. The north shores of Lakes Huron and Superior were almost as little known as Labrador. There was no Canadian North-West. Ontario consisted of a fringe of sparsely settled country

extending a few miles back from the St. Lawrence and Lakes Ontario and Erie; while in the whole Ottawa region there were but two or three outposts of settlement beyond the City of Ottawa. Outside of these the hunter and trapper were sole possessors of the country. Under such circumstances did Mr. Shanly and Mr. T. C. Clarke, now President of the American Society of Civil Engineers, make their examinations of the route and report strongly and enthusiastically in its favor in spite of all drawbacks.

Now the whole route is easily and cheaply accessible, and the cost of execution of the work thereby materially reduced. Towns have sprung up along its line. New, and then unknown resources have been developed, and only await the advent of cheap transportation to give rise to industries of great magnitude and supporting a large population. Last year the Canadian North-West raised over 30,000,000 bushels of grain, and our prairie country is on the eve of a progress in development more rapid than any it has hitherto known. The

any River District is to-day attracting the attention of capitalists the world over, and many predict that the mines of that region will prove as rich as those of South Africa. Along the "North Shore," and stretching far eastward into Quebec is being opened one of the richest mineral belts on the continent. The immense forests of the Ottawa region are of annually increasing value. Moreover, it has been learned that the whole of this region has a fine, rigorous climate, capable of producing the best type of physical manhood as well as all the principal products of the temperate zone. And that, interspersed among the ridges of rock, there are many intervals of fertile land well adapted for agriculture, which at the present time are being rapidly occupied by settlers, who find the conditions precisely those most favorable to profitable farming, the operations of mining and lumbering on the adjacent barren land affording a ready market at the farmer's very door for all he can raise. New industries too have given new value to the products of the country. Thus the use of nickel in ship-building gives the Sudbury deposits inestimable value. Pulp-wood is a commodity rapidly increasing in commercial importance, and the whole continent must depend on our northern forests for supplies of it.

Thus the need and demand for the canalization of the Ottawa are vastly greater than they were even a few years ago. Than the present, no more auspicious time for the undertaking of the work could be found. Not only is Canada regarded more favorably than ever before as a field for investment, but capital is better disposed towards this particular form of investment than at any time for years. If the opportunity to open up the Ottawa is allowed to pass, it is problematical when such a nice conjunction of circumstances in its favor will again be found. Either the success or failure of a deep waterway by any other route from the Lakes to the sea would seriously affect its prospects, the former because it would secure trade which the Ottawa, if constructed first would be sure of gaining, and the latter for the reason that it would cause capital to avoid enterprises of the kind without any just discrimination. It is probable that the Deep Waterways Commission may meet in Ottawa at some time during their investigations. It will be most important that the claims of the Ottawa route to recognition be not then passed over. Everything indicates that NOW is the time for the Ottawa River to be opened for traffic. Then, in addition to developing local resources of great richness, we will have another grand highway of commerce for the building up of our national prosperity.

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The following have been given among other reasons in favor of the immediate prosecution of the work :

First.—The direct benefit to be gained by the Provinces of Ontario and Quebec owing to the opening up of an immense tract of country the future of which is practically dependent upon cheap transportation for its bulky and heavy products, and the consequent increase of value of the extensive crown lands of those provinces.

Second.—The gain to the Canadian North-West of obtaining a route for the shipping of its grain crops which will enable the farmers to reach the Old World markets at a much lower cost for transportation charges than at present or by any other practicable route.

Third.—The market to be opened up for the manufactures of Ontario and Quebec by the development along the line of the route of a return trade to the North-West.

Fourth.—The advantage to the lumber trade of having a western as well as an eastern outlet by water, and direct access to the market afforded by the treeless prairies of the Western States.

Fifth.—The impetus which would be given to the commerce of the northern part of this continent by the opening of an alternative route which would have so important an influence on freight rates.

Sixth.—The stimulating effect of its existence would have upon the mining industry of Canada.

Seventh.—Its making available the immense natural forces in the water-powers of the Ottawa River and its tributaries, which, when utilized in manufacturing, milling production of electric energy &c., will add millions of dollars to the national wealth.

Eighth.—The Ottawa route is the only possible *all-Canadian* route from the Great Lakes to the Atlantic.

Ninth.—Owing to its sheltered position and distance from the international boundary, a through waterway on the Ottawa to the Lakes would in case of war be of the highest military importance and prove of great value as a means of defence and of protection for our commerce.

An undertaking of such nature appeals to every Canadian on patriotic grounds and should have the hearty support of every influential man in the community. As the action which may be taken by the Dominion Government on this occasion is certain to have a very important bearing, it is to be hoped that you can both be present, and exert your influence, towards bringing about a speedy accomplishment of an object which must approve itself to everyone interested in the welfare and prosperity of our country.

Very respectfully yours,

MCLEOD STEWART.